A ROSE OF NORMANDY

By WILLIAM R. A. WILSON

CHAPTER XIX.—CONTINUED.

"How know you it was I? Could not any one of the numerous female friends you must have at court have done as much?"

"True, mademoiselle, but they would not. Court friends are but friends if all goes well with one. When adversity sets in they speedily forget you. You will pardon me if I say that I knew of no one save yourself who would show such disinterested kindness to a man in need of aid. Besides, I chanced to see at Quebec a note addressed to Frontenac that he said he had received from you. The handwriting was the same as that which was handed me after the duel."

In spite of herself, Renee felt a thrill of pleasure as she heard the expression of his high opinion of her. This, however, was instantly replaced by a feeling of chagrin, as she realized from his last words it had been after all but a surmise on his part.

"Grant, then, that it was I," she said. "It was but repaying a debt I owed you. It was because of me that the quarrel originated. I would have done as much for any man. We are then quits."

"I dared not hope it was for any personal reason," replied Tonti, sadly. "But tell me one thing, mademoiselle, and I shall weary you no further. What have I done to merit the disdain you have shown me ever since we met in New France? Of what wrong or discourtesy have I been guilty?"

"No wrong have you done me," was the animated reply. "If you will know I shall tell you. It is because of the disappointment I can but feel to find that I have aided one so unworthy; because of the shame at recalling that those lips that have uttered such false vows have pressed this hand. If you seek further reason, go to your wife and child so cruelly abandoned in Paris, find Madame Bizard, ask them. Meanwhile, know that your presence is distasteful, that I scorn to receive your attentions; in fact, that I hate you!" and Renee pressed her hand to her heart, that throbbed "I love you" in spite of her words.

Tonti gave a start of surprise and murmured, "That woman again!" Then gathering himself up proudly, he replied: "What evil deeds or crimes you may impute to me I know not. I shall, however, continue in my duty to my friend, and not desist in my endeavors for your comfort and safety. I thank you for this interview;" and gathering up his load, he bowed and left the spot, angry with himself at finding that in spite of her wrath she was magnificent, and realizing how deeply he loved her.

Within a few days all was ready for their departure. The men sailed away in the vessel laden with stores and provisions, while Tonti embarked with the two women, Pompon, and the Mohegan warrior in a large canoe, and, turning its prow southward soon crossed the end of the lake in safety to its southern shore. Toward Renee he maintained the same attitude that he had before their recent interview. Again was her comfort sought in every way. When the wind blew strong or the weather threatened, a stop was made and they delayed until the skies had cleared and the water was once more calm. Game was not abundant, but fish were easily caught. Occasionally, when this diet became unpalatable, a camp was built, and several days were spent at rest, while the Indian made a trip toward the interior for venison or bear. No savages were seen, and Tonti hoped to be able to pass by the country of the Iroquois without meeting them. Over one-half of the distance was traversed without mishap, and they were opposite to that portion of the country inhabited by the Senecas, the westernmost nation of the Iroquois confederacy, when disaster overtook them.

They were proceeding along close to the shore because of the slight roughness of the water, and were making all haste in order to get over this stage of their journey as rapidly as possible, when they suddenly struck against the ragged edge of a rock just hidden beneath the surface of the water. Such was the force of the blow that a large rent was made in the bottom of the canoe, which quickly filled, careened to one side, and threw its occupants and contents into the lake. On coming to the surface Tonti beheld Pompon (who could not swim) clinging to the slippery surface of the tiny point of rock that had done the mischief, the canoe sunk, and the two women, whose clothing served to buoy them up, struggling wildly. With a shout to the Mohegan to save the nun, who was nearest him, Tonti himself struck out for Renee. Although the shore was some 200 yards distant, there was nothing to do but to swim for it. He seized the girl at the waist with one hand, while he strove with his legs and the remaining arm to urge her toward a place of safety. It was hard work, however, as the clothing that he wore was made of skins and soon became very heavy. Renee, too, frightened at the sudden plunge, struggled to free herself from his grasp. He finally calmed her, and telling her to rest her hand on his shoulder, he was able to make good headway.

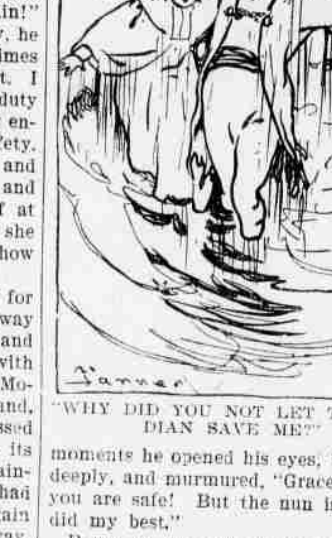
"Why did you not let the Indian save me?" she murmured.

"Because I, not he, am responsible for your safety," was the reply.

Soon they reached the land. Tonti was much exhausted by the struggle, but supported his fair companion to a dry spot on the sand and then turned his attention toward the rest. Pompon still clung to his precarious perch. The Mohegan and the nun, however, were in a bad plight. Terror seemed to have bereft her of reason, and she clung to her rescuer with a firm grasp, impeding his progress. Tonti saw that they would never be able to reach shore under the existing circumstances, shouted that he was coming, and, after throwing off his well-soaked coat, plunged to their rescue.

It was time that some help arrived, for the nun had clasped the man about his neck with a grasp that he was unable to shake off. Before Tonti had covered half the distance they sank from view. They soon reappeared, however, struggling anew. They were well-nigh exhausted and remained on the surface but a moment. Tonti called encouragingly, but they did not hear him, and sank again. As he reached the spot where they had disappeared, the head of the Mohegan arose from the depths, but he was alone. Breathless and half drowned he was, and Tonti had to support him to enable him to regain his strength. He soon learned that the nun had maintained her grip on the Indian's neck until they had sunk the second time and had only released her hold when they touched the bottom. Tonti then dived, but to no purpose, and yet a second time; she was not to be found.

Feeling his own strength beginning to fail, and knowing that the strong undercurrents had probably swept her body from that locality, he turned his attention to Pompon, who was making vigorous signals of distress, leaving the Mohegan behind to swim about and watch for the nun's reappearance. He reached Pompon, who had been occupied in slipping from the rock and clambering up again, just in time, and with him in tow turned toward the shore. The Indian soon relieved him of this weight, for he was fast reaching a condition when he would need help himself. As it was, had the shore been a dozen yards farther off he could not have reached it. He managed, however, to touch bottom and crawl out, throwing himself upon the sand, utterly exhausted. Renee, who had watched his brave efforts, ran to him, and loosening the sodden clothing about his neck and chest as best she might, chafed his hands anxiously. Forgotten for a moment was the past with the lies whispered by Madame Bizard into her unwilling ear, and she saw only her lover and hero, engaged, as when they first met, in bravely defending and rescuing those in distress; saw him, as she had dreamed of him so many times before, boldly battling for others, recking not of the tremendous odds against him; saw him victorious, yet vanquished. And as he fell her woman's heart beat fast with sympathy and alarm. Her touch seemed to invigorate him, for in a few



"WHY DID YOU NOT LET THE INDIAN SAVE ME?"

moments he opened his eyes, breathed deeply, and murmured, "Grace a Dieu, you are safe! But the nun is lost; I did my best."

Renee as soon as she saw that he had revived dropped his hand and contented herself with telling him of her appreciation of his superhuman efforts, assuring him that she was unhurt, and although lamenting the loss of her companion, expressed her thanks that the remainder were saved.

They were all indeed in a sorry plight. Not daring to light a fire, if they had had the means with which to do so, for fear of attracting the attention of the savages, they were unable to dry their clothes. Luckily the sand was warm, and by lying on it they were able to gather sufficient heat for comfort. Aside from their proximity to the dreaded Iroquois, other dangers threatened them. All of their guns, ammunition, and provisions had been lost in the wreck of the canoe; they were thus without food and with the prospect of a long weary march before them. After consulting among themselves, it was determined to make for Fort Niagara as rapidly as possible. Akiesko climbed the nearest tall tree to get a view of the surrounding country. He could make out no signs of Indians. They remained where they were for a day in order to regain their strength. During this time the Indian was able to set a trap and caught a rabbit, which he brought back in triumph. This had to be eaten raw. It was not a palatable dish for Renee, but she recognized the necessity of fortifying herself against the fatigues of the journey and bravely ate as much as she could. A few berries were also found.

They made but a short distance the first day, as Renee, unaccustomed to walking far, soon became foot-sore. They followed the shore of the lake as closely as possible, both because of the easier walking found there and also to keep near a supply of fresh water. At night they sought shelter beneath a tree, and each of the men took turns in watching, while Renee, wrapped in Tonti's coat, slept soundly after the fatigue of the day. They proceeded thus for a week, scantily supplied with food, although Akiesko exerted all of his skill and ingenuity in his endeavors to entrap small game or catch an occasional fish, and they had progressed so far that Tonti began to feel easier as to their ultimate safety. One day they were resting about noon beneath a tall fir-tree when Pompon was suddenly seized with the desire to climb to the top after a possible nest that he thought he spied high up among the branches. He had hardly reached the upper limbs when Tonti, glancing up, was attracted by the vigorous signs he was making. They were signs of alarm and caution. The rest immediately became silent and waited. Within a moment there emerged into the little clearing near which they stood a band of some two score warriors, evidently a hunting party from their dress. At the same instant they caught sight of the little shipwrecked group beneath the tree and advanced toward them with a shout. Tonti stepped forward and made signs of peace. The Indians proved to be a band of Senecas on their way to the lake to fish. Their leader stepped a pace nearer than the rest, and, addressing Tonti, said with a grunt, "Who are you?"

Tonti replied: "We are friends of the great Onontio of Quebec. He sends his greetings to his children and bids you aid us. We have lost our way and ask you to help us. If you will furnish us with food and a guide to his house by the Great Falls he will reward you."

"The hand of Onontio is weak, and he sometimes sleeps. We have not seen him for a long time; perhaps he is dead. He does not love us or he would not send the black gowns among us to bewitch our children, nor the traders who cheat us of our skins. If you were his friends he would not have allowed you to start upon so long a journey without providing you with food and guns. My white brother lies. The French at the house beside the Great Falls are not our friends, for they have made our young men drunk with brandy and then killed them. I can do nothing for you; you must return with us to our village. There the great chief Wolf, he whom you French call 'Le Loup,' will decide."

Resistance was useless, as during this harangue the savages had scattered and now completely surrounded the party. A seeming friendly compliance was the best course, so Tonti replying said:

"We will go with you to your village and there smoke the peace pipe with your chief. He will restore our strength and go with us to the Great Falls and receive his reward."

The party then took up their return march. Tonti and his companions were not molested in any way, but were treated with all kindness. He kept near Renee, who, affrighted at the sight of so many half-naked redmen, seemed to forget her former antipathy and imperceptibly moved closer to him. Pompon, unseen, was left behind, sheltered by the branches of the giant fir.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH SOME DISCOVERIES ARE MADE.

The advance of the party was not rapid, because of the inability of the captives to make long marches. The leader was evidently a subordinate chief who feared to ill-treat his white prisoners lest the responsibility of having provoked hostilities with the French should be laid at his door. At night a special shelter was provided for Renee, while Tonti and the Mohegan were permitted to rest on the ground near by. Four of the number were detailed to procure food, which they did in great abundance. An offer was even made to provide a sort of bark litter for Renee, swung from the shoulders of two of the braves. She refused this, however, as it would have separated her from Tonti, whom she silently appealed to more and more for protection. He noticed her changed demeanor, but attributed it to the fact that he was La Salle's friend and the only white man present. After the little camp was still at night he heard the call of a distant schreech-owl that he recognized as the signal of the ever-faithful Pompon, who was evidently following on their trail. On their journey to Quebec, after escaping from the Hurons they had devised a code of signs in case they should ever be separated. The number of hoots corresponded to a letter of the alphabet, the whole preceded by three series of cries of three calls each. Thus Tonti was able to spell out during the night the communication intended for him. "C-o-u-r-a-g-e," came the cheering message, "I s-h-a-l-l f-i-n-d m-e-a-n-s f-o-r y-o-u-r e-s-c-a-p-e."

Six days they journeyed thus. At length on the morning of the seventh the far-off barking of dogs was heard, and the prisoners knew they were approaching their destination. About noon they came upon a clearing about ten acres in extent, situated on a plateau overlooking a beautiful lake some half-dozen miles long. On this plateau about 60 dwellings of varying sizes were scattered irregularly. Their advent was heralded by the yelping of a horde of naked children, who surrounded them, followed by a swarm of Indian curs, who barked vociferously. The warriors bestowed a succession of cuffs and kicks when they approached too near, and led the captives to one of the smaller lodges, which was unoccupied.

The sides of this house were formed of a double row of tall saplings planted firmly in the ground, whose tops were bent over and lashed together at the top to form the roof. The many interstices of the branches served for the escape of the smoke from a fire which smouldered on the ground in the middle of the floor. Over all were spread sheets of bark like the clapboards of a civilized dwelling. From a number of cross poles near the roof were suspended a quantity of skins, clothing, pieces of smoked meat, and rows of dried ears of maize. Around the interior, about three feet from the ground, ran a shelf or scaffolding, covered with a few mats and skins, which evidently served for sleeping places for the inmates. Here in an atmosphere rendered almost unbearable by the heat and smoke of the fire, the three prisoners were left to await the return of the head chief and his men, who were off on a hunting expedition for the day. A guard at the door prevented any intrusion, and the weary travelers were left in peace. Tonti managed to collect a sufficient number of skins to curtain off one end of the room and form a soft pile on which Renee could rest. She received this thoughtful attention without thanks, but yet without the resistance with which she had formerly met Tonti's kindly offices.

[To Be Continued.]

Fixing Her Status.

A bachelor farmer a little past his prime, finding himself hard up, thought the best thing he could do would be to marry a neighbor of his, who was reported to have some bawbees. Meeting with no obstacles to his wooing he soon got married. One of the first purchases he made with part of her money was a horse. When he brought it home he called out his wife to see it. After admiring it she said: "Well, Sam, if it hadna been for my siller it wadna hae been there." "Jenny," Sam replied, "if it had not been for yer siller ye wadna hae been here yersel."—Philadelphia Telegraph.

THE CHOKE-DAMP HELMET

By JOSEPH KEATING

(Author of "Seth and the Fire Dragon," "The Irish Member," Etc.)

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William went slowly down through the face—the shining face of the coal—to see David. When he got into his friend's place David stopped hammering. His sledge-hammer slid from his hands.

William put his lamp down. Owing to the roughness of the bottom coal the lamp leaned a little, and the flame smoked and burned red up against the little circular glass. That would soon crack it. So William put a little bit of slag under the lowest side of the lamp to make the resting-place even.

"Strange, David, how a little thing like that could do so much harm," said he. "If the glass broke the gas could get at the little flame, make a big explosion, set the pit on fire, and blow you and me somewhere. Can't be too careful, David. Look at your lamp now."

"What's the matter with it?" David demanded a little testily.

"Nothing."

"Well—?"

"But you've put it in a very dangerous place, David."

William gravely stood upright. He walked to the lamp, unhitched it, and carried it down to the lower side of the roadway.

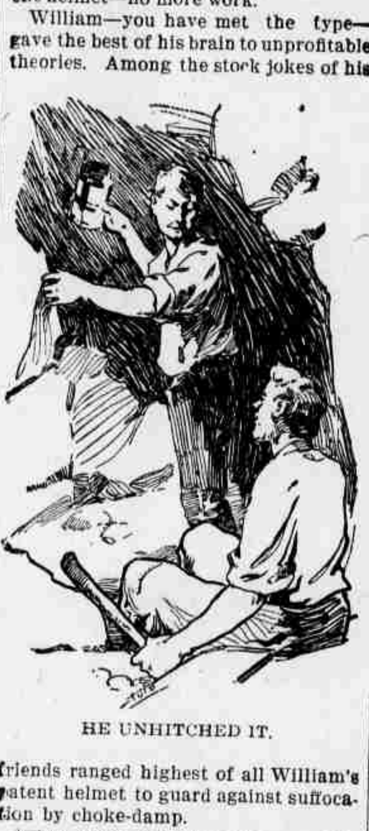
"It was too near your clod," he said, returning. "A back blow from the sledge when you are hammering might knock it."

"No fear."

"Well, then," William said, calmly shifting his argument, "it was in a dangerous place. When you knock the clod down—you might free a blower around the lamp and fill the place with gas. That's why I always take care to keep my patent helmet ready—indeed, you ought to have one of them helmets, David."

David here resolutely rose to close the discussion. He knew that once William got a start on the advantages of his patent helmet—no more work.

William—you have met the type—gave the best of his brain to unprofitable theories. Among the stock jokes of his



HE UNHITCHED IT.

friends ranged highest of all William's patent helmet to guard against suffocation by choke-damp.

When the last explosion happened in the Taff valley, the experts stated that more than half of the victims died from suffocation in the choke-damp which follows a pit fire.

William invented a way of escape in his helmet. He put a quart of water in the top, and ran a short tube from there to a sponge. If you happened to find yourself anywhere near an explosion, you should run to this helmet, clap it over your head, and put the sponge in your mouth. Daily he watered this helmet in his working-place at the pit as lovingly as a mother giving her first baby its daily dip. Sometimes William yearned for an explosion. He wanted so badly to test his patent helmet—and risk suffocation.

That night David worked late—he called it "worrking on"—because at home six or seven children, all girls, ate so much, and wore out their clothes so quickly. This demand exceeding ordinary supply, David hammered at "the old clod" after everybody else went home for the night.

"Tight enough, the old thing is," he grumbled, stopping a minute to look at his work and wipe off the perspiration. "Must get the bar."

He threw down the sledge, and took up a six-foot iron bar. He put the sharp edge of the bar into the slight crevice between the clod and the rock above, and prized, forcing the clod downward. It cracked, creaked, growled; the place became alive with falling pebbles. Then with a roar down came the layer of clod in tons, with a thick cloud of white dust.

The dust for a moment made it impossible for David to see.

Then a strange sound came to him—not falling of stones—not creaking top—not straining timber; but a rumbling, fizzing, peculiar noise—and gas fumes!

He darted through the dust toward the place where his lamp hung. He could see no lamp. Instead he saw a beautiful little ball of fire.

David understood at once that a stone had smashed a part of his lamp and that only one thing could follow—an explosion.

He quickly turned and ran back into the roadway.

Then he saw the ball of fire burst; he heard a terrific roar; he felt the air rush up to him like a big express train coming out of a tunnel.

"That's the explosion," said he, quite calmly, trying to pick himself up out of the dust.

He tried to walk; but after a tottering step or two he stumbled on his knee. He found it difficult to breathe; something went out of the air.

Now the thought of William's talk came back and brought the companion thought of William's idea—that something damp over the mouth would save anyone from death by suffocation in the after-damp of the explosion.

"I wish I had one of them patent helmets," thought David.

Then came a notion; if he could wet his calico cap and put it over his mouth—that might do as well as a sponge.

Almost overcome, physically, yet his slow, stolid brain remained clear. Quite resolutely he turned and staggered back toward the place where lay his drinking can.

He snatched at the drinking can with both hands. It held at best three pints.

He turned his back upon the fire and staggered away. Inside the jack, the now remaining drop of weak tea gurgled musically with the violent shaking it got.

He tore off his little calico cap, pulled the cork out of his jack, poured some of the weak tea upon the cap, and clapped it over his mouth. Instantly he felt the taste of the air come back. His strength came with it, and he felt very hopeful. Then in real earnest he ran up the road.

"There was a lot in poor old William's idea after all," he said.

Then feeling the benefit of William's idea, he naturally thought of William himself. And for the first time a sense of fear took hold of David.

As David neared the big road from which his own little road and William's branched, he expected to see William's light—either ahead or a little way behind. In either case, if he saw a light, he would feel easy about William.

"If I see a light, it will be William's," said he. "Because everybody in the district but us two went out at least an hour ago."

But at the top of the road—which David knew by the junction of tram lines under his foot—David could see no light either ahead or behind.

David, with his foot on the rail, turned to the left—toward the top of William's road. He reached this in a few seconds. He looked down. He saw no light. He felt the gas fumes stronger, and penetrating even the saturated cap over his mouth. The choke-damp, as a matter of fact, grew more powerful every minute and soon would be strong enough to destroy every live thing it touched.

"Dash that old William and his inventions and his carefulness!" David said. "If he didn't go potching with my lamp—shifting it from where I put it—this explosion wouldn't happened."

But in spite of this condemnation of the inventor and all his works, David turned down William's road.

Groping cautiously now, because he rather expected to come across William—either staggering or fallen—somewhere near, David went slowly down. His left foot—the right slid along the rail—kicked against something yielding.

"He's down," thought David, "suffocating."

He bent down. Just a glimmer of red shone upon a bare human body at his feet. David touched it with his hands.

"It's him," said he.

He gave him a shake—rough and fierce. A groan came back.

He jerked him upright. William tottered.

"That's it!" shouted David. "Come on, come on!"

He dragged him roughly along. William with every yard went more willingly, until by the time they reached the top of the stall road he, in an absolutely dazed state, ran with David like an automaton.

In the main road the fumes of gas and smoke choked them. But they struggled through. They reached the double parting, the distributing center of the district. Here the air, coming direct from the shaft, blew fresh and strong.

The pure air strengthened the men.

"Come on," roared David into William's ear.

William clung to his arm now, and they ran as human beings can run with certain death behind them. The dusty electric lamps in the archway at the pit bottom still remained alight. A few terrified colliers came rushing from other parts of the pit as David and William reached safety.

They all pounced into the pit carriage; signaled to the engine-man above, and in two minutes, at the pit-head in the sunshine, all congratulated one another.

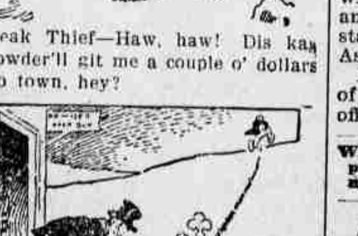
William's eyes blinked dazedly in the sunlight. Consciousness returned.

"I was just suffocated," he gasped.

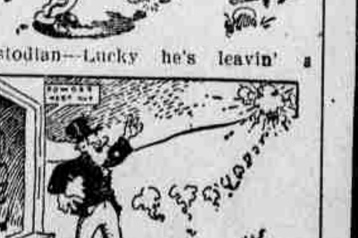
"Where's your old helmet?" David asked, accusingly. "I thought that helmet was goin' to do wonders."

"Oh, jawch!" said William, rueful, but truthful, "when I saw the fire, I clean forgot to put the old thing on."

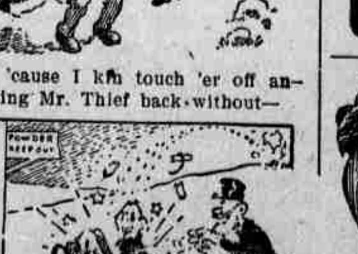
QUICK RETURN.



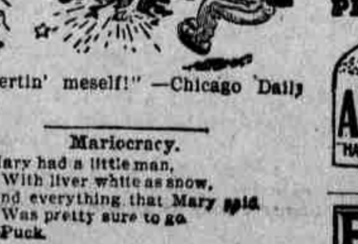
Sneak Thief—Haw, haw! Dis kag of powder'll git me a couple o' dollars up to town, hey?



Custodian—Lucky he's leavin' a



trail, 'cause I kin touch 'er off an—
"Bring Mr. Thief back without—



"Exertin' meself!" —Chicago Daily News.

Mariocracy.

Mary had a little man,
With liver white as snow,
And everything that Mary said
Was pretty sure to go.
—Puck.

There would be no end to arguing if everybody was wrong.—N. Y. Press.

No man climbs to the Father by treading on his brother.—Chicago Tribune.

Many fail through success, while others succeed through failure.

When generosity is a surgical operation it is often fatal to the patient.

Economy is the road to wealth—and it's a hard road to travel.

A. N. K.—B 2114